

Billy Graham's Grandson Evangelizes Kenya

Though Kenya just celebrated 50 years of independence, uneasiness looms in the nation as many wonder how the outcome of the March presidential election will affect their future.

The previous campaign season in 2007 led to deadly unrest, and a deep divide still exists. But a desire for peace and unity is starting to cover Kenya, and many religious leaders are helping spread the message.

In Kisumu, Kenya's third largest city, there's an even bigger sense of hope among pastors as they prepare for the Will Graham Celebration of Peace set for June 7-9.

The event comes at a time when unity, as well as lasting peace, is on the minds of countless Kenyans.

"Peace is vital [in Kenya]," said Celebration Director Solomon Bodhan. "People still do not understand the concept of Christian peace and harmony. Tribal conflicts and emotions take the upper hand above the biblical understanding of peace and harmony."

Bodhan has been very active in the months of planning leading up to the Celebration, which will kick off with a welcome parade and include additional events specifically for youth and women.

More than 100 churches are participating in the Kisumu Celebration, and the Internet is expected to play a major role in extending the event's impact.

Some 16.2 million Kenyans get online regularly and the country is the Billy Graham Evangelistic Association's most engaged audience on **Facebook**.

Mr. Graham first visited the country more than 50 years ago.

"Billy Graham Crusades in Nairobi and Kisumu in 1960 and again in Nairobi in 1976 were very well received and had a huge impact," explained Alex Kuria, country director for Samaritan's Purse in Kenya, who added that many of Mr. Graham's sermons are still shown on television.

During the 1976 Crusade, Mr. Graham delivered the message "be of good cheer." Will Graham—the grandson of Billy Graham who preached for the first time in Kenya in 2011—is expected to bring a similar word on the real peace obtained through Christ.

Both Bodhan and Kuria are praying that message will overtake the people of Kisumu and beyond for a much-needed revival in Kenya.

"Almost 50 percent of Kenya's population lives in absolute poverty," Kuria explained. "Daily life is a struggle, even though this may not be obvious from the cheer and joy many seem to exhibit."

Kuria said many Kenyans are concerned about crime and are looking to the new government for a chance at a better way of life. But his desire is for them to look to God for security instead.

"My prayer for Kenya is that God would be made known... that those in leadership would fear and honor God and serve with the goal of enabling the poor to have the basics they need in life," Kuria said.

Bodhan's hope is the same.

"I pray that the Will Graham Celebration may be unique in every way," he said. "And most of all the Kenyan people may rediscover their faith in Christ in a new way and begin anew to love Him and give Him first place in their lives."

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